



Community Garden Policy and Procedures

The City of Belmont Parks and Recreation Department sponsors an Organic Community Garden at Barrett Community Center. The Department supplies the basic site and water. An annual membership fee is charged. The garden is called the Belmont Community Garden. The purpose of the Garden is to provide a community setting for Belmont residents to experience, learn and participate in organic gardening.

Policy & Procedures

Registration Fees The annual registration fee is \$85. Registration fees are used to defray administrative and water costs and are not refundable.

Cleaning Deposit

New members are required to provide a cleaning deposit of \$75. The cleaning deposit is refundable in the event that the plot is vacated and left clear of weeds and debris upon relinquishing the plot. (see Deposit Refunds for details)

Registration Process All garden registrations are renewed annually. Registration materials are mailed to current gardeners at the beginning of each year. Along with the registration fee, each gardener must sign a copy of the Community Garden -Policy & Procedures Gardening Agreement annually. If a plot is not registered by the due date, an attempt will be made to contact the gardener to secure registration. Plots for which registration has not been received will be made available to new gardeners on the waiting list. To register for a garden plot or to be added to the waiting list, please contact the Coordinator or the City of Belmont Parks and Recreation Department at 595-7441.

Half Plots

Half plots may occasionally be available. All garden rules apply to half plots, including weed, path, and reassignment policies. They are charged the same fee and deposit as for a full plot.

Coordinator

The Community Garden has a part time non-paid Coordinator, whose duties include registration, garden inspection, policy enforcement, conflict resolution, organizing the maintenance of physical facilities, and other types of 'hands-on' activities.

Belmont Community Garden Policies

Gardening in the Community Garden is not exactly like gardening in your own backyard, because how you care for your plot impacts many neighbors. Hence we have policies on how and when certain things must be done. Garden policies are reviewed and updated as necessary by the Coordinator. They are then reviewed and approved by the Parks & Recreation Department and the Commission.

Use and Care of Gardens

Gardens must be **actively used** for growing crops; and must be **actively cared for** throughout the year, including during the winter. Regular care includes watering/harvesting when necessary, and the prompt removal of spent crop plants and the removal of weeds in and around the plots. Gardeners who do not actively garden during the winter either have to plant a cover crop, cover their plot with plastic or maintain their plot free of weeds. Plots that are not used or cared for will be reassigned.

Plots may not be used to grow crops for sale.

There is a limit of 1 plot per household.

Garden plots must be used by the gardeners to whom they are assigned. Plots may not be registered "in name only" while a friend or relative actually uses the plot and does most or all of the work.

Garden tenancy is transferable, with the permission of the Coordinator, to members of your immediate family or household, or to someone who has been registered with you as a co-gardener in the plot. With the exception of these individuals, you cannot transfer your plot when you leave

Weeds

All plots and adjacent walkways must be maintained weed-free throughout the year. Please note that herbicides are not allowed (see "Organic Gardening" section). Bermuda grass is considered an especially invasive weed and should not be allowed to spread; gardeners should dig out Bermuda grass from plots and adjacent walkways and remove it from the garden area.

Paths and Boundaries

You may not extend your garden beyond its official defined boundary. The boundaries of each garden plot are the raised wooden boxes. Please report wooden boxes in poor condition to the Coordinator.

Paths must be kept clear, level, and free of all obstructions. This includes weeds, garden plants, tools and personal belongings. Items that are not practical to keep inside your plot need to be clearly marked with your name and stored.

The paths adjacent to each plot are the joint responsibility of the gardeners on both sides of the path. Gardeners on the outside perimeter are responsible for maintaining a clear, walkable path to the adjacent fence.

Do not use boards, plywood, carpet or cardboard for 'mulch' in the paths - they present a tripping danger to people. We are advised that individual gardeners can be held legally liable for any injuries on a path adjacent to their plot caused by poor path maintenance. **Your garden plants and container plantings must not extend into or over the paths** - plan for growth when planting near the edges of your garden, and when locating a trellis or fence near the garden edge. Any garden plant extending into a path may be trimmed, moved, or removed by the Coordinator without notice.

Tall Plants, Pest Plants and Poisonous Plants

Please try to work with your neighbors when planting tall things such as sunflowers or bean trellises so you don't shade the adjacent gardens. Trees and large shrubs (shrubs over 3 feet) are not allowed, due to shading and root problems.

Plants that are invasive or are difficult to eradicate and that spread shoots, roots, thorns or branches beyond the plot boundaries are not allowed except in isolated containers inside one's plot. Examples include rose bushes, bamboo, large rosemary bushes, mints, berry vines, horseradish, sunchokes, perennial clovers and morning glories.

Poisonous plants are strictly prohibited (such as foxglove, hemlock, poisonous mushrooms)

Pests and Diseases

Gardeners are encouraged to keep diseases, insects and other pests under control so they do not spread into our gardens. Whenever possible you are asked to dispose of diseased plants in a way that limits the spread of disease (such as removal from the garden area).

Organic Gardening

Belmont Community Garden is an organic garden and adheres strictly to the gardening principles, concepts, and practices popularly called "organic".

Organic Gardening is a form of agriculture that relies on techniques such as crop rotation, green manure, compost and biological pest control. Organic gardening excludes the use of manufactured (synthetic) fertilizers, pesticides (including herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides), plant growth regulators, sludge and nanomaterials.

No herbicides are allowed in the gardens under any circumstances. Persons using chemical herbicides will be evicted.

Chemical insecticides are not allowed. Persistent or particularly harsh chemicals are not allowed. Natural methods of pest control such as traps, companion planting, good plant and soil health, beneficial insects and biological controls are encouraged. If you have any questions about what is allowed, contact the Coordinator.

Chemical fertilizers are not allowed. Natural fertilizers such as compost, composted manure, fish emulsion, kelp and cover crops provide a more balanced diet for the soil and a more favorable climate for the many organisms that make up healthy soil and disease resistant plants.

Products simply labeled “organic” or “natural” may not always be. Gardeners are encouraged to seek out soil amendments and products that adhere to principles of organic gardening. OMRI-listed packaging is one clear way to determine verifiably organic soil or amendment. If you have any questions, contact the coordinator for suggestions.

Waste Plant debris and weeds must be placed in the designated compost containers in the central common area of the Garden. These containers are for plant debris only: no rocks, no dirt. A trash can is located by the north gate. Don't overload cans with large or heavy items. Do not dispose of rocks or gravel in the trash cans.

Water

Hoses are provided. Hose shortages should be brought to the attention of the Coordinator. Do not leave water running unattended. Do not leave hoses under pressure. This can cause flooding and cause hoses to rupture. Any water that is left on unattended may be turned off. Do not run water outside of your garden plot, in the walkways, or in the common areas of the garden. This can adversely affect adjacent gardens and encourage weeds. The main **water shutoff valve** is located between plots 24 and 28 in the walkway next to the fence and the first water faucet. This valve shuts off the water to the entire area. If there is an emergency such as a broken water line, turn off the water at the main then contact the Coordinator, the City Parks and Recreation Department, or the Fire Department. If you call a City agency please also leave a message for the Coordinator so he/she knows that the problem has been dealt with.

Please do not waste water. The City may require rationing to conserve water.

Tools

We have a few basic tools in the Garden: shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows. These tools are labeled and have been donated by individual gardeners for everyone to use. Please use them with care and return them to the common area promptly when you are through. Report missing or broken tools to the Coordinator. Tools are used at the gardener's own risk. Tools that are kept in individual plots are not to be borrowed without the owner's permission.

Garden Access

Gates need to be closed fully while gardening to discourage non-members from entering. Visitors are welcome when attending with a member. Children under age 10 must be supervised within the garden.

Pets

Pets are not welcome in the Garden regardless of whether they are on a leash or within your control. Dogs that are repeat invaders should be identified and reported to the Coordinator or to Animal Control.

Community Work

All gardeners are required to participate in the maintenance and improvement of garden facilities by participating in three clean-up events per year. Specific dates and time will be announced. If you cannot make a workday, a list of tasks will be assigned.

Notices and Procedures; Contacting You

Notices of major significance (fee deadlines, etc.) will be mailed whenever possible. Notices to individual gardeners may be mailed to their address, attached to their plot, or made by phone. General notices may be posted in the common area of the Garden. Mailed notices go to the gardener's last known address. Because mailed notices may include time critical items such as registration or weed compliance deadlines, it is important to keep the Coordinator informed of any changes of address or phone.

Leaving / Deposit refunds

If you decide to give up your plot, please notify the Coordinator so your garden can be reassigned quickly before it gets weedy and run down. If you don't tell us, it takes 2 or 3 weeks to figure out that it is abandoned. When you have cleared your plot, ask the Coordinator to inspect it and see if it is in "refundable condition", which means: no weeds, plants, stakes, wire, trash, etc. - *except* for crop plants (and their supporting structures) that are healthy and within their normal growing season (the Coordinator may require even these to be removed). If the plot is in refundable condition, the Coordinator will notify the Parks and Recreation Department, who will issue you a refund check within about a month. Be sure the Coordinator has a valid forwarding address. If the garden does not pass inspection, you will have 1 week to clean it up. If it is then still not in shape, the deposit is forfeited. You may appeal a non-refund decision to the Parks and Recreation Department. Plots vacated due to eviction or abandonment are not eligible for a refund of the deposit.

Abandonment

Any garden that is apparently abandoned may be reassigned with 2 weeks' notice. If you are unable to care for your plot for an extended period, please consider giving it up so that someone else can use it. In special circumstances, where illness, injury or other commitments will only be for a few months and have a known ending date, other arrangements may be made if approved by the Coordinator.

Vacations

Vacationing gardeners are not exempt from weed and other maintenance rules, or compliance deadlines. Get to know your neighbors; ask for their assistance while you are away. If you have a substitute gardener, inform the Coordinator. It is wise to contact the Coordinator before you go on extended vacation, so we know that you are not abandoning your plot.

Policy Enforcement

The Coordinator is responsible for interpreting and enforcing the policies. Most issues can be resolved in an informal manner; however experience has shown a need for a formal process to deal with some issues (weed policy enforcement, for example). The Coordinator will attempt to call or meet the gardener to discuss the problem. If the Coordinator determines that a plot or its owner is in **substantial** violation of garden policies:

1. Written notice of the problem and a request for corrective action will be mailed.
2. If the problem remains unresolved 1 week after the written notice is sent, a one-week deadline notice will be sent.
3. If the gardener does not comply within this 2-week period, he/she will be evicted.

Gardeners are encouraged to discuss the situation with the Coordinator at any time during this process. Special circumstances will always be taken into account and other arrangements may be made, at the discretion of the Coordinator. All notices including final evictions are reviewed by the City of Belmont Parks and Recreation Supervisor, and appeals may be made to the Coordinator or the Supervisor.

You are required to sign this form and return it to the Belmont Parks and Recreation Department in order to complete registration.

Community Garden - Policy & Procedures Gardening Agreement

As a condition of membership in the Belmont Community Garden I have read and agree to comply with the City of Belmont Community Garden Policy and Procedures.

I hereby absolve the City of Belmont, its employees, independent contractors and officers from all liability that may arise as a result of my participation in the Community Garden. I/We agree to allow use of my/our photographs(s) for program publicity.

Signature

Date

Name

Address

Phone Number (day or evening phone)

Email address